

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-13 (Canceled)

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to one of claims 19 and 22, wherein the spray pattern has a fan shape, the fan shape corresponds to the number of inclined passages.
15. (Previously Presented) The method according to one of claims 19 and 22, wherein the spray pattern has a fan shape, the fan shape corresponds to a cross-section of each of the plurality of inclined passages.
16. (Previously Presented) The method according to one of claims 19 and 22, wherein the spray pattern has a fan shape, the fan shape corresponds to the angle of inclination of each of the plurality of inclined passages.
17. (Previously Presented) The method according to one of claims 19 and 22, wherein the spray pattern has a fan shape, the fan shape corresponds to a distance of each of the plurality of inclined passages from the longitudinal axis.
18. (Previously Presented) The method according to one of claims 19 and 22, the spray pattern has a fan shape, the fan shape has a plurality of plumes.
19. (Currently Amended) A method of generating a spray pattern from a fuel injector in a direct injection application, the fuel injector having a body, a longitudinal axis, a needle slidably disposed within the body, and a seat disposed at a fuel outlet, the method comprising the steps of:
 - engaging a tip of the needle against a surface of the seat to form a seal;
 - providing the seat with a plurality of passages between the surface and the fuel outlet, the passages having ends that terminate into a the seat having an exit passage disposed ~~on the longitudinal axis~~ at the fuel outlet, each of the

plurality of passages having a central axis having an angle of inclination relative to the longitudinal axis, an end of at least one of the plurality of passages is at a different distance from the longitudinal axis than the ends of the other passages, and

supplying fuel to the fuel injector so that a spray pattern is formed.

Claims 20-21 (Canceled)

22. (Currently Amended) A method of generating a spray pattern from a fuel injector in a direct injection application, the fuel injector having a body, a longitudinal axis, a needle slidingly disposed within the body, and a seat disposed at a fuel outlet, the method comprising the steps of:

engaging a tip of the needle against a surface of the seat to form a seal;

providing the seat with a plurality of passages between the surface and the fuel outlet, the passages having ends terminating into a ~~the seat having an~~ exit passage disposed ~~on the longitudinal axis~~ at the fuel outlet, each of the plurality of passages having a central axis having an angle of inclination relative to the longitudinal axis, an end of at least one of the plurality of passages has a different cross-section than ends of the other passages; and

supplying fuel to the fuel injector so that a spray pattern is formed.

23. (Previously Presented) The method according to one of claims 19 and 22, wherein the angle of inclination for at least one of the plurality of passages is the same as the other passages.
24. (Previously Presented) The method according to one of claims 19 and 22, wherein the angle of inclination for at least one of the plurality of passages is different than the other passages.